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Conclusion: The unchangeable unit is the fascicule. Three of the libraries, or four counting Harvard, have adopted this unit and it seems to agree with Oriental custom. Harvard recommends, therefore, that this method be adopted and that where further specification is desirable the count be given as so many works in so many fascicules.

The last paper of the session was by Mr. Aksel G. S. Josephson, of the John

Crerar Library on "The cataloging test; results and outlooks."

(See p. 242)

The nominating committee, through the chairman, Mr. Voge, proposed the following for officers for the ensuing year: Chairman, Edna Goss, head cataloger University of Minnesota Library; secretary, Bessie Goldberg, head cataloger Chicago Public Library. This ticket was elected and the meeting adjourned.

CHARLOTTE H. FOYE,
Secretary.

CHILDREN'S LIBRARIANS' SECTION

FIRST SESSION

The first session of the Children's Librarians Section was held in the Auditorium on Wednesday evening, June 28, the chairman, Miss Gertrude E. Andrus, Seattle Public Library, presiding. The subject of the meeting was "CRITICAL COMMENTS ON LIBRARY WORK WITH CHILDREN."

Dr. Arthur E. Bostwick, St. Louis Public Library, read the first paper.

(See p. 209)

Mr. Henry E. Legler, Chicago Public Library, read the second paper.

(See p. 205)

Mr. R. R. Bowker, of "Library journal," was then called upon to contribute to the subject and spoke as follows:

Mr. BOWKER: Madam Chairman and fellow grown-ups—indeed, until Dr. Bostwick succeeds with his suffrage campaign in relation to children's librarians, I should say "lady grown-ups": If I do not treat you with brevity and levity I shall try not to tire you with too much longevity. Happily I am pretty sure to forget the larger part of what I should like to say; happily especially because the Fairy Godmother is to follow me, and we hope that all this talk will be followed by a real discussion of any points that are brought before you, if you young ladies can, like Ulysses, stop

your ears with arguments against the siren strains that tempt you to the dancing floor.

Most of us were once a child—not the plural—because this is individual work, though some few were born old. We think of ourselves as children of a larger growth, and I suppose there is a general notion in the community that anybody who has been a child and is of the feminine persuasion is fitted to be a children's librarian; but the children's librarian is one, I will not say born, not made, but properly selected by the library school and the librarian, and stands to the child even in a more important relation in some respects than *in loco parentis*.

We hear a great deal of abuse of parents in these times; and indeed, parents are not apt to know their children over well. I remember crossing in a steamer once and forming an intimacy with a young lady not up to flirtation age, and after a while her father, passing by, said, "I perceive you have formed a closer intimacy with my daughter than I have ever had the honor of enjoying." One of the reasons why the parent has difficulty in knowing the children is that the children are with the parent all the time. It is the every-day relationship which perhaps has a bit of the commonplace in it, whereas the child

comes to the library eager for the new things and the children's librarian has the opportunity to take advantage of that eagerness. Then you have not the temptations of the parent: you cannot whip the child if you want to. I am fond of quoting Mrs. Bowker on Froebel: Froebel is saying what he thought of corporal punishment. He said, "Madam, if your brains are not stronger than your arm, I believe in corporal punishment!" You can't use your arm as the parent can, or as the old-fashioned school teacher could. You have to use your brains, and therefore you have a relation with the child which is in some respects even more effective from time to time than that of the parent. The child looks to you eagerly and with avidity, hopeful to get of your best, and I think the first thought should be as to how the child should be met.

Now, you may ask why I am speaking to you about children rather than, perhaps, about children's reading. First, because Miss Andrus told me to do so, and told me with a voice that reached all the way across the continent, sweet as it may be in this hall, and secondly, because I have long collected children. When I was a boy I collected postage stamps; later I collected children; I have brought up temporarily several small families of other people's children, not altogether without success. I have come into intimate relationship with many children. I say this because I want to emphasize the real way of coming into such intimate relationship. I know of nothing worse than the way of approaching a child when you ask its name, and age, and, if it has studied French, if it can't talk a little French for you; a few questions of that sort will put the child absolutely on its self-consciousness and leave no possibility of intimacy. The child comes to you naturally, with a purpose; there is that kind of immediate intimacy between you, and this is really the great opportunity that the children's librarian has with the child. The opportunity, in some respects, as I have said, is more effective than that of the parents or even of the teacher, whose work

with the child must be confined within school hours.

Miss Plummer's address gave to me really two points on which I should like to speak this evening. Miss Plummer spoke of the main difficulties in the way of humanity as ignorance and fear. Now, there are essentially two kinds of ignorance; the one is the ignorance of the child, with which you have to do; the happy ignorance of want to know; the other is the ignorance of the adult, who won't know, who doesn't want to know; and they are as different as the poles. The ignorance of the child is, of course, your opportunity, and as the child comes to the inquiring age, that is the age at which the child comes also to the library. I always think of the child's mind as going out like the antennæ of insects, quivering with desire to know. Perhaps you have heard a child, as I have, coming into a room and saying, "What dat is? What dat is? What dat is?" faster than you can possibly answer; it is simply a thirst to know, and too often such inquiring is followed by its suffocation by the unappreciating parent. This receptivity of the child is the field for the first work of the children's librarian.

I am not meaning to take your time to discuss books in detail, and the principles of reading. There are those wiser than I about that. I am not to discuss how you should answer the unanswerable questions that the child asks. I am not wise enough, no one is wise enough, for that; questions about birth, death, sex, and the like. Before those we are ourselves all more or less agnostics. We can not rebuff the child by rebuking him for his ignorance. We can only, as in the fine poem of Walt Whitman regarding death and the child, say that we do not know, but that we hope, and to the child we can simply show the analogies of nature that will some day answer for him—that every day answer for him—the questions which we also ask. So the ignorance which is a curse to the adult is the opportunity of the child, and your opportunity.

The difficulty of fear—does that come

with the child? I think not, and I think one of the chief aims of the children's librarian should be to banish, and not to encourage fear. I suppose most of us have our bugaboos, many of them, alas, brought from early childhood. I remember Wilkie Collins once telling me that, just as he was on the point of finishing those terrifying novels of his, always as he went up the stair there waited for him a green woman with yellow tusks, to try to bite him as he passed. That was the excitation born of the nervousness of the work, but I suspect there was some left over from the early days of the child. We know of a little child, whose father might very rightly be here, who was taught by her nurse that there was a tiger under the bed, and for months the mother could not get at the truth; perhaps the children's librarian could have done so. But that child was distressed and probably influenced in all after life by that unhappy fear which had been given her. That same child had read Scripture to poor purpose, or had been told Scripture to poor purpose, because when they read of Daniel in the lion's den she said, "But why did God put Daniel among the lions? It wasn't nice." It was said to her, "Well, he came out all right." "Yes," she responded, "but he had to stay all night among the lions!" Another story is that of the little girl sent up to bed and told the Lord would take care of her. There came up a thunderstorm, and a small voice was heard upstairs, "Mama, mama, you come up to bed with me and let God stay downstairs with papa!"

I tell you these stories because they really give you a picture of the child's mind, and show the importance of avoiding fear, and I am going to challenge the Fairy Godmother with reference to the telling of certain fairy stories which I think err decidedly in that direction. Perhaps one of the things I should criticize in the present children's library is the over-tendency to story-telling. Indeed, story-telling has been given an exaggerated emphasis, I think, as a matter of literature and education, and I have heard with dis-

tress some of the stories told to children, out of folk-lore, to be sure, which I felt would leave in their minds these very after impressions of fear. I think I heard one told by the Fairy Godmother herself. I should question much story-telling about the devil; I recall, for instance, a legend of Table Mountain and the devil's tobacco pipe, told by a well-known story-teller, which seemed to me at least unkindly. We may say that these came in the childhood of the nations, therefore the child wants them and should have them. But let us remember this: The savage, of course, began the history of the race, and we repeat it more or less. But the child of today is not the child of a savage; it is the child of all the heredity since the savage, and it does not seem to me that the modern child needs to have, or should have, or can well have these pictures which the savages, as savages, conjured up to themselves of the awful, malevolent deities which constituted their theology.

In speaking as I have of the inspirational work of the children's librarian and its moral nature, I would emphasize what I like to call the apostolic succession of this kind of work. Perhaps not all of you have heard the story of Helen Keller and the apostolic succession which made that wonderful woman and brought her out of darkness into radiance. When Dr. Samuel G. Howe, the head of the Perkins Institution for the Blind, and one of the great leaders of the blind, went to Athens nearly a century ago to aid the Greeks, he looked about for some young Greek who would help with his knowledge of the people and of the language, and he learned of a young man named Anagnos. He asked about Anagnos and found he was a young journalist, earning his living by journalism. When he sent for Anagnos and said, "Will you come and help me do this work for your people?" Anagnos said, "Of course." Dr. Howe asked, "How much shall I pay you?" "Nothing, because if you have come over here on this work of helping my people, I, as one of my people, cannot take money for my work." So for a good while Anagnos

served Dr. Howe as secretary and helper, and the Doctor told him that when he wanted to come to America his passage would be provided for. Later on he did come to America. He taught one of Dr. Howe's daughters Greek, and later she became his wife. Presently Anagnos became the successor of Dr. Howe. After a while his young bride passed away, and in the depths of his sorrow he received a letter from the South—from Alabama—in which a physician told him of the birth of a child who seemed to have no means of communication with the outer world. There seemed to be a spirit that wanted to come out, but she could not see, or speak, or hear. There had been in the Perkins Institution a young woman, Anne Sullivan, who had been helped from blindness into light. She was grateful and wanted to do her share in the work. Anagnos thought over whom he could ask, and he sent for Anne Sullivan, and asked her whether she would think of going to Alabama and taking up this work. She said, "I will think about it." She went home, got together the books written about Laura Bridgman, that first blind deaf mute, and came back and said, "I have read all I can about Laura Bridgman, and I am ready for the work." Anagnos said, "How will you teach the child?" and here is the great phrase: "I will let the child teach me how to teach her," said Miss Sullivan. That spirit showed Anagnos that he was right, and that spirit was the key to Helen Keller. Miss Sullivan went South and said to the father and mother, "You must let me have Helen in a little house by ourselves, and I must have entire control and familiarity with her." She began the simple business of trickling water on Helen's hand and spelling out the sign language that meant water. What I want to point out is that through Samuel G. Howe, through Anagnos, through Anne Sullivan, through Helen Keller, a great inspiration has come to the world. That, to me, is the real apostolic succession, and that is the kind of work that is before you, if you will have it, as children's librarians.

I never can forget, I like to speak of the

work that "Mawtucket of Pawtucket" initiated for children. Mr. Peacock here is one of Mrs. Saunders' boys. Miss Hewins took up the work independently, but doubtless the later children's librarians got more or less inspiration from Mrs. Saunders, who was the first, when the children peeped around the door, to welcome them in and cut off the legs of the tables and chairs and give them a place to sit down and look at picture books.

Then in the University Settlement work we have Helen More, who dealt with Jewish boys, and I wish I could take the time to tell you how boys were helped by her through settlement work and finally through college and in after life. I cannot imagine better proof of the opportunity you have in your work. I recall that Miss Annie Carroll Moore has told me it was through some acquaintanceship or knowledge of Helen More that she was interested in children's work, and many of you have reason to know, in turn, how much Annie Carroll Moore has been to you. There has been you see within our own circle an example of the real apostolic succession, and we may hope that out of this company may come such great radiations of influence which will have their work in inspiring children's librarians of the future and molding in a way we cannot imagine the life of childhood in the future, and the life of the great future itself.

To till flowers in the garden is one of the chief delights of life, but to till flowers in the garden of childhood, that the flowers may unfold to their brightest and best, is one of the noblest occupations in which woman (or man, Dr. Bostwick) can indulge.

Miss Marie Shedlock, of London, storyteller and specialist in children's literature, contributed to the discussion as follows:

MISS SHEDLOCK: One of the drawbacks of speaking last is the fact that your predecessors have always stolen your thoughts. There is very little left for me to say. I don't in the least know why I

have had the honor to be chosen to speak with these eminent people. But I may say a few words, if only to express my admiration for the children's library work in this country. I should like to tell you what an Englishman said of it. I was explaining some of the mysteries and charms of your children's rooms and he said, "If only we could have something like this here in England. We have a library dumped down upon us and very little else done." When I visited Manchester I asked the librarian about the children's room and he said "Oh! if you have seen the children's libraries in America we have nothing to show you here." And he added, "I think we should have some of their librarians over here"—he mentioned the name of Miss Plummer. I was glad that he mentioned this because Miss Plummer's work seems to me to be most excellent for this reason: she always recognizes the truth of the axiom that a part is less than the whole, but she also recognizes that a part can be a very important fraction of the whole, and she has never treated the children's work as just a department by itself, but has always connected it with the whole movement. Therein lies her greatness, and if you will pardon me for a personal reference I should like to say I am deeply grateful to her for giving me the honor of appearing before the librarians, for it was she who first presented me and gave me the opportunity to meet so many librarians.

I want to thank you for the very kindly generous spirit in which you have received my little work in story-telling. I had not intended to mention my part of the work at all, and that is the only reference I shall make, except to answer the challenge about telling the brutal folk-lore stories. I always protested most strongly against stories which create fear. Nobody has ever heard me tell such stories.

I thought that all the papers would be before me so that I might build up what I was going to say on what other people had said, but I saw only one of these admirable papers before it was presented here tonight. I am now coming to the criticism

part. I believe I am obliged to say that I entirely agree with Dr. Bostwick's point that the good books are neglected in favor of the late books. I think it is the spirit of the whole of America, that you are so eager to be up-to-date that sometimes you wish to be almost beyond the date.

That reminds me of a story of an Englishman who was in a humorous mood—for they do have them, sometimes—and who said to a little paper boy, "Well, my lad, have you any of tomorrow's papers?" The boy paused, but considering the question a mad one took no further notice of it. The Englishman was on his way to Dublin, and when he arrived there he put the same question to a paper boy, "Have you any of tomorrow's papers?" The boy at once replied, "I sold them all yesterday, your honor!"

It is rather natural that Americans should want the children's room to be up-to-date, but it seems that you are skipping over generations of things, and your children have that spirit, too.

I entirely agree with Mr. Legler on the question of too many abridgments and compression of masterpieces. There is, however, one exception I should like to make. I think it is well in story-telling to choose part of a story and lead the children to a further examination of that subject by saying, "You will find the book on the shelves." That, it seems to me, is the real good that story-telling is going to do.

Now, for my own criticism. I think the fear that Mr. Bowker spoke of, fear in the children, that that danger is not so great as perhaps a certain amount of fearfulness on the part of children's librarians. I think that you hover in a rather too protective manner over your children, and are just a little too fearful of their not reading what you wish them to read. That is a pity, because it prevents the child from making the complete investigation. It is so difficult for you not to tell the children the things you love and hope they will love too, but after all, a second-hand admiration is always a little second-rate. The great thing for librarians to learn is to let the

children have a part in their own education.

Then there is the question of too many women in the library. I share absolutely the opinion that the work would be done better by an equal number of men and women. We feel in England more strongly, perhaps, than you do, that the best kind of work is always done by men and women together; that the work, for instance, among the poor has been done by both men and women most successfully. I think the best children's library work will be done when you have an equal number of men and women doing the kind of work necessary with children.

The grave danger, if you will allow me to say it, is that of making reading rather a virtue than a privilege. We are apt rather to praise children who read instead of impressing on their minds what a privilege it is to be able to read.

One of the best things Mr. Legler has done has been to give constructive criticism. I thank him, as an old teacher, for the thought that bringing this joy to children is in time accompanied by disillusionment for you. As an old woman I should like to say to the young librarians, there comes a time when you are disillusioned, and you may think your work is not so worth while. Then it is that that sentence is worth while. Having outlived your disillusionment you still find great value in your work.

In the June number of the "Atlantic monthly" there is a most remarkable paper by Bertrand Russell on "Education as a political institution." Probably most of you have read it. I think it is the most suggestive thing I have read in education for a long time, and I am going to read a little portion from it because it seems to me that what he says of education in general will apply most particularly to children's librarians. He says that children are more or less at the mercy of their elders, and cannot make themselves the guardians of their own interests. Authority in education is to some extent unavoidable, and those who educate have to find a way

of exercising authority in accordance with the spirit of liberty, so as not to produce a spirit of glib mediocrity. "He thinks it is his duty to 'mold' the child; in imagination he is the potter with the clay. And so he gives to the child some unnatural shape which hardens with age, producing strains and spiritual dissatisfactions, out of which grow cruelty and envy and the belief that others must be compelled to undergo the same distortions." It should be to "help the child in its own battle, to strengthen it and equip it, not for some outside end proposed by the state or by any other impersonal authority, but to the ends which the child's own spirit is obscurely seeking." I think that if, as librarians, we made that our aim it would be a marvelous help in the education of the child.

The CHAIRMAN: There are people here who must have something to say in reply to some of the things the speakers have said. I hope that we will have a very active discussion. Just to start the ball rolling I am going to say "You are it," and I am going to say it first to Mr. Dudgeon.

Mr. DUDGEON: Madam Chairman: It may be possible that I am not a children's librarian. I feel like suggesting something from the standpoint of the parent rather than from the standpoint of the librarian, and it seems to me that one very striking fundamental principle has been suggested repeatedly tonight. As I studied the problem of a child's literature in my own home, I found that we were forced to let the child teach us how we might teach our child. In other words, we had to experiment a little, and try this and try that to find out really what the child wanted, and to get the child's point of view; to project ourselves into the child's position and to see how the child looked at literature and what the child wanted, rather than to try to conceive of what we thought the child ought to want.

And I want to say that the generally recognized principles of children's librarians proved very true. The first principle

we noticed was that the child's tastes were good. For example, we tried a number of things on our little girl between four and five years old, and finally found that reading aloud "Hiawatha" pleased her more than anything that we could do. We then discovered that the original unabridged literature suited her best. We discovered that in this way: We had read to the child the original text, Indian names and all. A friend of the family brought to us the "Hiawatha Reader," in which everything is fully explained, and all the hard words cut out, and so forth, and we read this faithfully—tried this on the child, and at the end of about three days the child, rather timidly, and in the absence of the person who had presented the book, asked us if we would not request the donor to "take that nasty book away!" I want to suggest that at least in these two books we found that the principles recognized by librarians evidently are very true: first, that the child will choose what is best; second, that the original and unabridged and real thing is better than the abridged and unreal and doctored piece of literature.

The CHAIRMAN: It seems to me as though there must be some difference of opinion on the point of children wanting new books to read. Will someone please give her experience on that question. Miss Zachert, what is your experience in connection with new books for children; do you feel that the children want them in place of the best books?

Miss ZACHERT: (of Rochester, N. Y.) Of course they always want them, and it should be left to the wisdom of the children's librarian to give just the proportion that should be given.

I think the speakers have given to those who have been children's librarians and who might combat any criticism very little of the adverse but have made us feel that after all we children's librarians have a wonderful opportunity. You see children are in the library first a duty, then they are an asset, and finally they are a joy. The time is not long past when there was

a notice: "SILENCE! CHILDREN AND DOGS NOT ADMITTED." Now in the larger libraries the best corner is given to the children, the best books given them, and the greatest wisdom used in the selection of their books; yet over and over again, as we go through small towns, we find libraries with no children's department. It is our duty to the child to tell them about children's work and emphasize children's work.

Then the children are an asset. It has been my fortune to work where the library was a new venture in the community, and the number of children who came when we opened a new branch has been gratifying. They cause the circulation records to go up, and in that way they are an asset.

Best of all they are a joy, because you know that nothing is too good for them. The cataloger may have her place, and the others their functions; the head librarian has a wonderful opportunity, but after all, the greatest opportunity comes to the children's librarian. There came once a visitor to our library, where that afternoon were nine hundred children. There were several of us grown-ups there, but when she looked about she said to me, "You are the children's librarian." I said, "Oh, yes, I am; but how did you know?" She replied, "When you go into a school and you see someone who is very, very happy, that is the kindergartner, but when you come into a library and see someone who is idiotically happy, that is the children's librarian!"

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Legler's point of criticism was largely taken on the score that the children's department of the public library is not an unmixed blessing. Is there anybody who thinks it is an entire blessing—that it works only good and no harm? Miss Herbert, I am going to call on you; apparently I have got to continue saying "You are it."

Miss HERBERT (of Washington, D. C.): I think the difficulty one has in getting up an argument is perhaps due to the fact that we are so much in agreement with the speakers that there is nothing to argue

about. I was interested in Mr. Legler's point that there is danger that the children will read more than they think, and it reminded me of an experience I had this winter. I went to speak to a parents' association and one of the speakers who spoke before me was from the Associated Charities. She made an earnest appeal to the parents to teach their children to save their pennies (it was in a poor district), and when she got through a Socialist rose and tore her paper all to pieces talking in a way that really was very critical and a little difficult to meet. When I rose to speak afterwards I noticed the same man with a notebook making notes and I wondered what I was going to meet at the end of my little talk. He finally rose and said, "May I ask the lady something? I should like to ask: if the children read all the time, when do they think?" I could not help thinking he had brought out the weakest point in our work. I think the weakness of the children's work is that in our interest to get the millions of children in the country supplied with books we perhaps forget that it is not altogether an unmixed advantage to the children who could be reading better books, to put in their hands the necessarily less good books which will appeal to a good many of the younger and the less privileged children. In the schools, the problem of meeting the needs of the superior children is a serious one, and I have wondered if possibly the time will come when we also may have to make some special arrangements for them. I have a feeling possibly that that is one of the gravest weaknesses of all work in a democracy; that we are inclined to allow the high to come down because we are so concentrated upon bringing what is necessarily a little inferior up to the average.

Mr. GEORGE (of Elizabeth, N. J.): We seem to have reached the stage of wondering, and I would like to add some wonders of my own. I confess it strikes me that after all the difficulties are in the high standards of the libraries themselves. If it is a fact that all the literature does not

live up to the high standard I wonder if there is not some necessity for it? I wonder if there is not some substantial justification for that literature being there? I would like to indulge in the privilege that several of the speakers have taken (Mr. Dudgeon, for instance, referred to his own family), and use my own family to illustrate my point. By the way, I wonder if there will ever be a meeting of this kind that will treat concretely the questions before us, and give names, instead of setting before us abstract examples of what is proper for the children to read? I have searched through many children's librarians' talks in the "Library journal" and "Public libraries" and found Robert Louis Stevenson and possibly one or two more authors recommended, but I never found many concrete examples, and in our effort to find a good standard set of books to get into the library we have found difficulty in obtaining suggestions, and we don't tell anybody what we have here. Amy Brooks is one of the best circulation boosters there is, but I don't suppose many people would feel justified in boosting circulation that way. My own children's librarian will not have any more Brooks. But even among the standard authors a poor one will creep in, and I feel like "trying it on the dog"—our young daughter, to see how it goes; but the children's librarian will always insist on sending it back before my daughter gets it.

In referring to my daughter I want to say that I feel there is some justification for that old expression, "When I was a child I spake as a child." My child is a thoroughly human child. I think her studies in school are up to the high standard we want to give the children through the medium of the libraries. A couple of weeks ago, after her school had closed, she happened to read in the newspaper headlines that the successor to the former president of China had been chosen. She called him by name (I can't do it) and said, "Why did they put him out of office?" She had heard about political ambition, and so on, and she thought that his suc-

cessor having been chosen, the former president must have been put out of office. I had read of the death of the president of China, so I informed her of that fact. She said, "That is because I have not kept up my 'Current topics.'" In her school they use that, and the child was informed on affairs both in our country and abroad; they have tests on the subject in school. I think that is pretty high class work.

A man has been mentioned here tonight, one of the most respected and the best-known of librarians in this country. A couple of years ago I sat in his office and he said, "George, have you been reading any fiction lately?" I said, "No; I have not had much time." He said, "Get the 'Red button' and read it: it is a dandy!" I got the "Red button" and I read it, and I was entertained while I was reading it. So I think that in our libraries there is a justifiable place for such books. I think that the children are having crammed down into their brains enough of the substantial things to justify some of the lighter literature.

Now, Mr. Bowker refers to the savages and our present generation, and says that what is necessary for the savage is not necessary for this generation; but you can't take one generation removed or two, possibly, and find that explanation satisfactory for the need of the literature that is desired. I maintain, too, that the examples quoted by all the speakers on these topics every time are examples of people who are exceptional. When some particular person has reached a high position in life it is because those people have done it in spite of and not because of their having read certain books. Those people would have reached their positions whether they read the "Life of Lincoln" or not. Between ninety and ninety-nine per cent of the people never could have been interested by the same things they were interested in. At a recent grand jury dinner in our town, attended by several judges and other distinguished men, I was chairman of the entertainment committee, and as one of the forms of entertainment

I asked those men to tell me what literature they had read when boys; and there was hardly a man who was not perfectly familiar with Alger and those books, and I shook hands with every one of them! I don't believe that a generation or two is going to make so much difference. I am told Alger, and some of the rest that we read, must be thrown out, and they are thrown out, but I don't believe that it is fully justified; they are entertaining and inspirational. I have expressed my wonder and I have made my confession!

Mr. TRIPP (of New Bedford, Mass.): I agree with Mr. George that nearly every man has at some time read Alger and Nick Carter.

I would like to make a criticism of the work of children's librarians. When all are shouting hosannas there ought to be one Jeremiah to make his lamentation. I think that children's librarians err in this respect: They give the children too much to read. There are too many books. They fail to see the woods on account of the trees, and I think we all err in that respect. I know in my library most emphatically we make a mistake in furnishing too much reading for the children. When we grown-ups go into an art museum like the Metropolitan, we are overwhelmed and do not really enjoy the artistic treasures there as much as if we were confined to a room in which there were three or four first-class pictures to look at, admire, enjoy and appreciate. When a child is set loose in a room where, as in my own library, there are five or six thousand attractive children's books spread out for him, he is overwhelmed. It is too much of a tax on the intellect of the child to allow him to go around and browse among those books and select what he wants to read, when he does not really know what he is after. It would be much better if he were told by the children's librarian that on Monday he can only take out a book from that case; that on Tuesday he can pick out a book from the next case, and so on around. I think it might be really worth trying. I assume that all

the books are worth reading at one time or another.

We grew up on Oliver Optic—Alger came later, but Oliver Optic was the children's favorite then. I don't really find that they do much harm. Seriously, I do think that the range is too wide for the children; that we should limit their reading. We are too lavish. We are either too much unprepared or too much prepared. We do not do things by halves. We just go the whole figure. I was a teacher for a great many years, and when I was in the schools a few years ago the craze was for Madonnas. The children were overwhelmed with pictures of the Madonna. They did not select two or three representative pictures to put before the children, but there were twenty or thirty, and the result was that a child came to me one morning at that critical time between Thanksgiving and Christmas, when turkey was served in a great many varieties, and said, "There are two things I am sick to death of: Madonnas and turkey soup!"

Take up another point, the lack of concentration. Every time I go into the children's room I see little urchins there taking picture books and wetting their fingers—if they are not reproved by the librarian—glancing up at a girl, if they are old enough, and turning the pages to see one picture after another, without paying any particular attention to what is on the page they have before them, but going from one thing to another without any concentration. And then what do we do? We put into our children's libraries such monstrosities—Mr. George says we don't go into concrete facts, so I will be concrete—we put into our children's libraries such monstrosities as the "Book of knowledge," which is a hodge-podge of miscellaneous, ill-assorted information. The agents come around and tell me I am the only librarian in Massachusetts or New England or in the United States that doesn't tumble over himself to buy that for the children's library. I know that he is not telling me the truth; but none of

his efforts prove successful: I have turned him down and turned him down again. The child reads a little smattering and turns over the page. I think it is all wrong; I think it is absolutely opposed to the principle that ought to be at the foundation of education: to teach concentration. I really hope sometime we will make a concerted effort to concentrate our energies on something that is worth while to bring to the children joy; I would not have them read anything distasteful or anything burdensome to their little intellects, but I do believe they would be happier if they had some definite purpose and pursued it.

The CHAIRMAN: Our speakers have certainly given us food for thought in the preparation of a program for next year's meeting, and if we follow out some of these ideas perhaps we can arrive at something definite. Is there any one else who has something to add to the discussion?

Miss ROBERTS: Mr. George spoke of Alger, and here is a little experience of mine, years ago. A young boy came in and asked for Alger. He had Dumas and I asked, "Will you take another Dumas?" He said he had read all of Dumas. "Will you take Victor Hugo?" He said he had read all of Hugo. He said "I have read everything except Meredith." Then I asked, "What do you want Alger for?" He said "You know how it is: after a while you get so tired it is very comforting to pick up a book where the good boy always grows up and marries his employer's daughter and the bad one gets hung!" I remember that Gladstone read "The Duchess" in his leisure moments. I should like to ask Miss Shedlock what she thinks of the story of Beowulf for children. It is one of the things I have been looking at seriously lately. Is it too gory?

Miss SHEDLOCK: I think very much depends on the age of the child. I think the mistake we have made with these fairy stories is that we have told them to children when they are too young. It would be better to leave it to come at an

age when they would not be frightened. "Jack the Giant-Killer" could be put off until a little later. We have to be careful. I have never told Beowulf but I think it would not be terrible for a child of seven or eight years.

Miss ANNA TYLER (of New York): I, too, feel hurt a little bit about what Mr. Bowker said. I want to say just this, because I happened to tell the story that he referred to. Furthermore, I take it on my own shoulders. The story happened to be one connected with a series on South Africa. To finish up one of these series I gave the one "How Table Mountain got its cloud," told by the natives and then retold to us. It was told to a crowd of boys from fourteen to sixteen years of age, quite old enough to hear stories of that kind. I feel strongly about the myths and these great stories, and believe that they should not be given to the children until they can understand the difference between myths and folklore or fairy tales, and therefore I do not think that the average child is ready for myths—and you must put Beowulf in with the legends and myths,—until that child has reached the age of at least eleven years. Of course, when you begin with the individual child as early as four or five and read to that child "Hiawatha," by the time that child is eight years old he is quite able to comprehend almost any great myth story, but the average child is not. I wish to wait until the average child is ready, and he is not ready before he is eleven or twelve years old. Mr. Bowker heard me tell that story in connection with South African stories. It was in connection with the celebration which we were giving at a certain point in the city where we were having slides of the Dutch occupation of New York, and the only Dutch story that would apply was "How Table Mountain got its cloud," so it was told that night.

The CHAIRMAN: While we are on the subject of story telling, it would be appropriate to hear the story which Miss Shedlock has promised us.

(After Miss Shedlock had told the Japa-

nese story of the two frogs, the meeting adjourned.)

SECOND SESSION

The second session of the Section was held in the ball room of the New Monterey Hotel on Friday afternoon, June 30, at two o'clock. The meeting took the form of a Round Table conducted by Miss Caroline M. Hewins. The first topic considered was, "Training in work with children for librarians in small libraries." Miss Crain of Somerville spoke on the need of careful selection of children's books in small libraries. She suggested book lists as helpful in making purchases, and told of the new bibliography of lists called "Aids in selecting children's books," recently published by the Massachusetts State Library Commission. Visits to larger libraries she also considered of great importance to workers with children from smaller libraries.

Miss Donnelly of Simmons College told of the summer courses at Simmons planned for the librarians from small libraries, and Mrs. Root, of Providence, urged duplication of these summer courses in other places.

The subject, "Children's librarians as social workers," was discussed by Miss Zachert of Rochester. She said that the successful children's librarian, besides knowing books, must be a social worker. At least fifty per cent of her time ought to be spent outside the library.

"Co-operative lists" was another subject which had been suggested for discussion. Mr. Rush of Des Moines, Mr. Wheeler of Youngstown, Miss Hassler of Queens Borough, and Miss Moore of New York spoke briefly on this subject.

"Fines," the last subject to be taken up, was discussed by Miss Hewins who spoke with much spirit on the disciplinary value of fines in a children's room.

The Section unanimously adopted the report of the Committee on resolutions which presented the following to be sent as a night letter to Miss Plummer:

"The Children's Librarians' Section

gathered in final session at Miss Hewins' Round Table sends affectionate greetings to its honored president. It desires to express its grateful appreciation of her early recognition of the library's part in the education of children and her valued contributions, of which Mr. Chapman's inspiring paper on children's reading is one more reminder."

After a story by Miss Shedlock, "To your good health," and a vote of thanks to her for the pleasure and inspiration she had given, the meeting was adjourned.

BUSINESS MEETING

At a short business meeting held Friday morning, June 30, the following officers were elected:

Chairman, Alice M. Jordan, Boston Public Library; vice-chairman, Alice I. Hazeltine, St. Louis Public Library; secretary, Rosina C. Gymer, Cleveland Public Library; advisory board, Richard R. Bowker, Library Journal, New York, and Edith Tobitt, Omaha Public Library.

A proposed letter to be addressed to the American Booksellers' Association concerning better binding for children's books was discussed. A committee was appointed to investigate the matter and report next year.

JESSIE G. SIBLEY, Secretary.

COLLEGE AND REFERENCE SECTION

The College and Reference Section met in the Auditorium on Wednesday afternoon, June 28, William M. Hepburn, librarian of Purdue University, chairman of the Section, presiding.

The CHAIRMAN: The general subject of the afternoon is as stated in the printed program "Research facilities in American libraries." This is not a new topic, but old subjects constantly recur and new things have to be said about them. The subject has also been referred to by other speakers at this conference, notably by Mr. Bishop in his paper "Leadership through learning." We will let our program speak for itself and after the three formal papers are presented we hope for an interesting and profitable discussion. I will now call upon Dr. Walter Lichtenstein, of Northwestern University, for his paper on "Possible results of the European war on the European book market."

(See p. 200)

The CHAIRMAN: In working up the program the committee were fortunate to find one who had been thinking and working along the same line in her own special field and they are pleased to be able to present a paper by Miss Adelaide R. Hasse, chief of the Documents Division, New

York Public Library, on "Library preparedness in the fields of economics and sociology."

(See p. 202)

The CHAIRMAN: Among the formal papers, we wished to have a statement from a practical worker in the field of research, a statement of what library research means to the practical scientific worker, and we were able to secure such a paper.

Dr. Walter T. Swingle of the Department of Agriculture, Washington, in cooperation with Mrs. Swingle, has prepared for us a paper on "The utilization of photographic methods in library research work with especial reference to natural science."

(See p. 194)

After the reading of the formal papers there was a spirited discussion of which the following is a condensed report.

Dr. SWINGLE: In reply to the question of Mr. Bishop, I would say that it was important to have a list of the Chinese books in Washington and in other great libraries of the country. The Department of Agriculture is spending thousands of dollars in investigations on the economic plants of China. It seems ridiculous to speak of